

My Pandemic Experience

The pandemic has impacted us all. This guide helps you to reflect on your personal experience. Try to find a quiet place, and around 30 minutes, to use the questions to explore what has been going on for you, and where God has been in the midst of it. (This sheet is based on a resource from CPAS: <https://www.cpas.org.uk/browse-everything/resources-recovery-phase>).

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is embedded in Christian practice as a way of recognising all that God has given to us. Paul writes 'Give thanks in all circumstances' (1 Thessalonians 5:18). We don't give thanks for everything, but we do seek things to give thanks for in any situation. Interestingly, neuroscience shows that the brain is like velcro with negative experiences (they stick and are hard to release) and teflon with positive experiences (they slip off too easily). Taking time to give thanks helps them to stick.

Practices:

- Keep a gratitude list. Write down three things each night you are grateful for from the day.
- Say some simple prayers thanking God for these things.

What are you thankful for? Think about small daily things, such as food, as well as bigger wider things, such as frontline workers.

Lament

Lament is woven through the Christian tradition, rooted in the Psalms of lament, for example Psalm 42. It involves honest recollection of how we are feeling, and a passionate expression to God of the pain and difficulty that we are experiencing.

Practices:

- Pray aloud the Psalms of lament (e.g. 3, 6, 7, 13, 17, 22, 28, 31, 32, 35, 42, 43, 51, 52, 54).
- Write your own prayer of lament and pray it daily.

What are you missing, longing for? This may be people or things you have lost, hopes that have been dashed or longings for a better future.

Learning

God specialises in redemption. Out of difficult times, hard places, struggles and suffering, God longs to lead us to greater dependence on him, and deepening Christ-likeness (Romans 5:1-5, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10).

Practices:

- Journal to aid reflection. It doesn't have to be done everyday, or even written.
- Talk through your experience of the pandemic with someone, inviting them to ask questions and to listen carefully.

What have you learned? What does God want you to learn through this experience that perhaps you can only learn at a time like this: about God, about life, about yourself? What will you do differently as a result of the pandemic?

Prayer

In prayer we bring all of who we are to all of who God is. We also bring all that is going on in our lives and the world around us to the one who is creator and sustainer of all things.

Practices:

- Take 15 minutes a day to read some of the Bible and pray. This can be done almost anywhere: in a quiet place, during your commute, out walking the dog.
- Try Bible in a year as a great way to structure your Bible reading.

What would it be good to think about in your praying over the coming weeks? People, situations, and concerns - local and global.

You can either keep this sheet just for your own reflection or hand it in to us at St. Luke's church, either anonymously or not. We can either use the sheets to look for themes as to how people are feeling about and reflecting on the present crisis or if you tick the box below, we may share your answers on our website.

- I am happy for my responses to be shared on the church website.

My name is (Optional): _____